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Viewing cable 06RIYADH9095, xxxxxxxxxxxx ON IRANIAN THREATS

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Understanding cables

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- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
06RIYADH9095	2006-12-16 14:18	2011-08-30 01:44	SECRET//NOFORN	Embassy Riyadh

Appears in these articles:

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VZCZCXRO6985
OO RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 RIYADH 009095

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/04/2016
TAGS: [PREL](#) [EFIN](#) [PTER](#) [IZ](#) [IR](#) [SA](#)
SUBJECT: xxxxxxxxxxxx ON IRANIAN THREATS

Classified By: Ambassador James C. Oberwetter for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

(S/NF) Summary: xxxxxxxxxxxx told Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Frances Fragos Townsend that he was speaking for the King when he urged action to counter Iranian threats. xxxxxxxxxxxx said he worries more about an

Iranian missile launch against Saudi oil facilities than a terrorist attack against them, because he can take preventative measures against terrorism but not against Iranian missiles. On the Iranian banking initiative, xxxxxxxxxxxx urged getting action from the UAEG to freeze what he claimed was up to \$12 billion in Iranian assets in Dubai-based banks. xxxxxxxxxxxx also discussed the failure to establish a charities commission, and the need to replace the head of Saudi's financial intelligence unit, as well as the King's personal security measures. End Summary.

Iranian Bank Assets and Transactions

12. (S/NF) In an early hour meeting at his palace in Riyadh November 15, xxxxxxxxxxxx began by asking APHSCT Townsend if there were any follow-up items from her meetings the prior day with Prince xxxxxxxxxxxx or Prince xxxxxxxxxxxx. Townsend noted that xxxxxxxxxxxx had a list of banking institutions doing business with Iran. We need to use leverage with them, she added, to get them to do what UBS and Credit Suisse have done. xxxxxxxxxxxx agreed. He suggested we need to have an approach, either openly declare the policy as governments or perhaps get some of the banks to announce a new policy towards Iran by themselves.

13. (S/NF) xxxxxxxxxxxx saw Dubai as the problem for this new initiative. He said Dubai has 8-12 banks with extensive links with Iran, holding up to \$12 billion in Iranian assets. xxxxxxxxxxxx indicated he had met with MBR and MBZ and that MBZ was supportive of our efforts. We need to send someone quickly to the UAE to freeze these assets before the Iranians begin to unload them. In addition, he continued, the Saudi Monetary Authority should issue a caution to Saudi banks to refrain from Iranian transactions or else jeopardize their international dealings.

Terrorist and Iranian Missile Threats to Saudi Energy Facilities

14. (S/NF) Townsend next raised recent threat information about Saudi energy facilities. xxxxxxxxxxxx noted that the Security Facilities Service aims to reach 35,000 personnel, with all military services contributing to it. xxxxxxxxxxxx said he was relatively confident in the SAG's ability to handle terrorist threats to the energy facilities by deploying more forces and building perimeters. The more dangerous threat, in his view, is a SCUD missile launch from Iran, which could happen with short or no notice. The Iranians would target Saudi facilities at Ras Tanura and Jubail, also perhaps the US bases in Qatar and Bahrain, which would cause the Saudis to be involved as well, he said. His concern was that tightening sanctions on Iran will cause Iran to up the ante, triggering an escalation leading to a missile launch. Given the possibility of this scenario, he speculated on the option of a pre-emptive strike. "I would rather be on the offensive since we are the target," he said, later adding that he meant a state of military readiness, not offensive action. xxxxxxxxxxxx stressed that this sense of urgency came from King Abdallah, he was not freelancing. He added that he, Prince xxxxxxxxxxxx and Prince xxxxxxxxxxxx were getting together an "Iran to-do list."

15. (S/NF) On the Europeans' positions, xxxxxxxxxxxx asserted that French President Chirac wants to be satisfied we've done everything possible politically. However he is not prepared to accept Iran as a nuclear nation. Russia got an earful from King Abdallah, he claimed, on relations with Iran and Syria.

Counterterrorism Cooperation

16. (S/NF) xxxxxxxxxxxx sees an "alliance of convenience" between Iran and al-Qaida. He and Prince xxxxxxxxxxxx agree that Iran would try two terrorist tracks against Saudi Arabia: al-Qaida elements and the "mini-Hizballah" in the Eastern Province.

Asked by Townsend on how other GCC countries are cooperating on CT, xxxxxxxxxxxx said he is very satisfied with UAE, not unsatisfied with Bahrain, but not comfortable with Kuwait's

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position. Townsend, who had met with the Amir of Kuwait on November 14, agreed the Amir is focused only on what happens in Kuwait, xxxxxxxxxxxx said there was a disagreement in Kuwait on CT measures. xxxxxxxxxxxx said his main channel there is the foreign minister who has a steady hand and who is not comfortable with what he sees. Oman, xxxxxxxxxxxx continued, thinks it's safe because it is too far away. xxxxxxxxxxxx said he hoped the December 9/10 GCC Summit would include a clear statement on counterterrorism cooperation.

¶7. (S/NF) Townsend raised the status of the commission to monitor and regulate Saudi charities, saying that since this commission was announced publicly long ago and not yet established, it is now a credibility issue. xxxxxxxxxxxx agreed, noting that the Government was going slowly because of fears of being attacked by the religious people, But he said it was time to bring it to the King and get a decision. "Since we often get accused of being autocratic, we might as well be autocratic once in a while." He added that if pious Saudis wanted to help the poor, there were plenty of poor Saudis they could help and thus no need to fund outside charities. When Townsend raised the importance of the Joint Terrorist Finance Task Force, xxxxxxxxxxxx replied that he wants to resolve this so they could get items like this off the agenda and focus on the real strategic threat -- Iran. Townsend said she would be thrilled if she didn't have to raise it again on her next visit.

¶8. (S/NF) On counterterror financing issues, xxxxxxxxxxxx said Muhammad bin Nayef was unhappy with the head of the Saudi Financial Intelligence Unit xxxxxxxxxxxx, and would replace him. Bandar claimed that Muhammad bin Nayef reports having frozen 189 bank accounts, with nearly \$20 million in frozen assets. xxxxxxxxxxxx asserted that the SAG shared our interest fully in going after terrorist financing, but that we need to do it intelligently so as not to create economic martyrs for the religious extremists.

The King's Personal Security

¶9. (S/NF) Townsend raised recent measures to provide new equipment, which xxxxxxxxxxxx thanked her for. He added that he was trying to convince the King to buy 3 or 4 helicopters, including a medical helicopter, Lockheed Martin models, similar to those used by POTUS. But the King says he cares first about the security of the country, and less about his personal security. If the King doesn't use them, xxxxxxxxxxxx said they would find another use for them.

¶10. (U) APSCT Townsend has cleared this cable.

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